

Whereas, the lives of wage earners and their spouses are seldom coterminous; one often outlives the other by decades, making it crucial to preserve a secure base of protection for children and other family members dependent on a wage earner who may die or become disabled, and

Whereas, Social Security, in current form, reinforces family cohesiveness and enhances the value of work in our society, and

Whereas, Congress currently has proposals to shift a portion of Social Security contributions from insurance to personal investment accounts for each wage earner, and

Whereas, Social Security, our largest and most fundamental insurance system, cannot fulfill its protective function if it is splintered into individualized stock accounts and must create and manage millions of small risk-bearing investments out of a stream of contributions intended as insurance, and

Whereas, private accounts cannot be substituted for Social Security without eroding basic protections for working families, and such protections, to be strong, must be insulated from economic uncertainty and be backed by the entity best capable of spreading risk, the federal government, and

Whereas, the diversion of contributions to private investment accounts would dramatically increase financial shortfalls to the Social Security trust fund and require major reductions in the defined benefits upon which millions of Americans depend; and

Whereas, to administer 150 million separate investment accounts would require a larger bureaucracy, and the resulting expense and the cost of converting each account to an annuity upon retirement would consume much of the profit or exacerbate the loss realized by each participant, and

Whereas, the question of whether part of the Social Security Trust Fund should be diversified into investments other than government bonds so that, while still invested collectively at low expense, returns may be increased, thus enhancing the capacity of the fund to meet its obligations to pay benefits while spreading the risk across the entire spectrum of Social Security participants, is entirely different from that of splintering its millions of accounts, and

Whereas, creating an array of winners and losers would be contrary to the basic principles of insurance and risk distribution, thus defeating the purpose of this part of our retirement system, and

Whereas, Congress amended the Internal Revenue Code to provide a full menu of provisions that enables working Americans and their employers to voluntarily contribute to tax-sheltered accounts that are open to the opportunities and exposed to the risks of investment markets, diverting Social Security contributions to private accounts duplicates existing programs, and

Whereas, such recently created systems now cover half of American families, now therefore be it

Resolved, by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly respectfully and strongly urges Congress not to enact laws that might tend to diminish or undermine a unified and stable Social Security system, and be it further

Resolved: That laws to encourage workers and their employers to save or invest for retirement should supplement and not substitute for the basic benefits of Social Security insurance that are vital to American working families, and be it further

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives of the United States and each member of the Vermont Congressional Delegation.

A TRIBUTE TO THE GRANHAN PLAYGROUND WOLFPACK

HON. ROBERT A. BRADY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 1, 1999

Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor a great Philadelphia sports program, the Granhan Playground Wolfpack. The Wolfpack is the latest in a long time of Philadelphia champions. My city is the proud home of many former, and future champs: people like Joe Frazier, the 76ers, the Flyers, the Phillies and the Eagles. And now, we can add the Wolfpack to that long list.

This year, Granhan Playground is not only the home of the 12 year old and under hockey champs, it also produced the 15 years old and under championship team. Mr. Speaker, this record breaking season could not have happened without the determination of kids who gave their all to bring glory to their neighborhood. The 12 and under team won with a talented roster featuring Mike and Kevin Cassidy; Kevin Lowthert; George Bochanski; Dan Devine; Mike Devine; Joe Walsh; Chris Porter; Mike McLaughlin; Chris Porter; Jason Mardinly and Rich Canfield. They also benefited from the skills of goalie Sean Rodgers, this year's Vezina award winner.

The 15 and older squad, anchored by fellow Vezina trophy winner, Julie Bochanski and playoff mvp, R.J. Carrido; featured Joe Walsh; Joe Grajek; Tom August; Jay Bailey; Brain DiTomo; Jim Dougherty; Josh Mills and Tom Kay, proved to be equally fierce competitors. They did their neighborhood proud in their march to victory.

But none of this would have been possible without the support and involvement of Wolfpack parents, family, and community volunteers. I am proud of them and all they do to help these kids grow into healthy and productive adults. And I have a special pride in one young man who works with the "Pack." I want to salute Robert F. Brady, my son, who is Recreation Leader at Granhan Playground. I love him and am proud of all the work he does.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all my colleagues to join me in saluting the Granhan Wolfpack on this successful season and wish them many more.

CONGRATULATING ROSALINA FREEMAN FOR IMPROVING COMMUNITY HEALTH IN EAST TENNESSEE

HON. VAN HILLEARY

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 1, 1999

Mr. HILLEARY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Ms. Rosalina Freeman, who was recently named one of ten outstanding individuals from around the country to receive a \$100,000 award from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Community Health Leadership Program (CHLP).

Ms. Freeman is the founder and executive director of Reachout, Inc., which provides rural health education and services for East Tennessee's Hispanic factory and farm workers. Reachout works with other rural health care

providers to offer mammograms, cancer prevention education, HIV/AIDS prevention, lead and pesticide education and post-natal education. In addition to these rural health services, Ms. Freeman's Reachout also offers GED programs and translation services.

Thanks to Ms. Freeman's leadership, dedication and caring spirit, the translation and referral services have reached more than 3,000 people in eight rural East Tennessee counties. More than 2,000 high school students have received Reachout's AIDS/HIV education program.

Ms. Freeman herself overcame great odds before helping improve rural health care for others in East Tennessee. Born in Puerto Rico, she has lived in Cocke County for the past 29 years. She earned an undergraduate degree in sociology in 1990, then went back to earn a Masters in health education in 1996. She even had to overcome her own illnesses stemming from a rare muscle condition.

Mr. Speaker, at a time when rural health care has been under direct assault from Washington, it is refreshing to see a private citizen take it upon herself to try to solve the problems she sees in her community. Ms. Freeman probably said it best when she said, "We believe in letting communities be the biggest part of the solution to addressing and solving their problems * * * I am committed to helping provide the tools to my community so it can help itself."

I agree completely, and I want to once again thank and congratulate Rosie Freeman for everything she has done to improve rural health care in East Tennessee. There is still much to do before rural health care receives the kind of attention it deserves, but with caring people like Ms. Freeman on the job, the situation looks a little brighter.

PRESERVING HEALTH CARE CHOICES FOR SENIORS

HON. MICHAEL BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 1, 1999

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, today, I am proud to introduce legislation that will help millions of Medicare beneficiaries whose health coverage is in jeopardy. My Florida colleague, PETER DEUTSCH, has joined me in sponsoring this bipartisan measure. Our bill—the "Medicare+Choice Risk Adjustment Amendments of 1999"—will help to preserve and expand health care choices for seniors who participate in Medicare managed care plans.

The Medicare+Choice program was created as part of the 1997 Balanced Budget Act to increase health care options for Medicare beneficiaries. While the majority of beneficiaries remain in traditional fee-for-service Medicare, enrollment in managed care plans has grown rapidly in recent years. Many seniors now depend on the additional benefits (such as prescription drug coverage) available through plans under the Medicare+Choice program. However, a serious crisis threatens this vital program.

Last year, nearly 100 Medicare managed care plans did not renew their Medicare contracts or reduced their geographic areas of